

RM 11065

-----Original Message-----

From: Christopher Wagner [mailto:cwagner@fadcentral.org]

Sent: Saturday, August 28, 2004 11:17 AM

To: Michael Powell; Kathleen Abernathy; Michael Copps; KJMWEB; Jonathan Adelstein

Subject:

August 28, 2004

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

JOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Dear Commissioner:

On behalf of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened individuals in the State of Florida, I wish to share serious concerns regarding captioning of emergency alerts or disaster preparedness by local television stations. The recent disaster by Hurricane Charley has brought thousands of individuals to our attention. Many stations did not provide live captioning, or did not set the captions appropriately. Complaints include no live captioning, text streaming or station logos which would block the captions, or the interpreter provided by the State.

One serious concern is that many stations would stop providing captioning once the hurricane has passed through their coverage area. I had emphasized the importance of the stations continue captioning after the disaster to assist Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened individuals in receiving pertinent information for assistance during the recovery process.

I must applaud Mr. Craig Fugate, State Emergency Operations Director for urging all media in Florida to consider captioning during the preparedness of Hurricane Charley. AmeriCaption, Inc. of Sarasota, Florida also has provided excellent coverage through captioning in the Tampa Bay area for 33 hours straight, to assure that the community is up to date on the hurricane status. This one small example of increasing awareness is just not enough for the local broadcast stations to take this matter seriously. Florida is the home, if not the largest population, of more than 2.1 million Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened individuals. Lack of accessibility will put many of us in jeopardy.

I am asking you to please address this matter seriously, not only in the State of Florida, but nationwide. Disasters are unpredictable however, with information provided in a timely manner, accessible to all individuals, lives could be spared. It is time for the Federal Communications Commission to take this serious matter into consideration, and to issue serious consequences to entities that are not in compliance.

I appreciate your time in this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Wagner

Christopher D. Wagner, President
Florida Association of the Deaf, Inc.
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www.fadcentral.org

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cc: Rick Kottler, President, Deaf Service Center Association
James Diaz, President, Florida Self Help for the Hard of Hearing
Lois Maroney, President, Association of Late Deafened Adults
Dennis Filloon, President, AG Bell of Florida
Karen Anderson, Agency Liason, Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Julie Shaw, Executive Administrator, Governor's Working Group on Americans with Disabilities Act
Nancy Bloch, Chief Executive Officer, National Association of the Deaf
Kelby Brick, Director, Law and Advocacy Center, National Association of the Deaf

RM 11065

EMAIL RECEIVED AT FCC IN RESPONSE TO PETITION RE CLOSED
CAPTIONING

007 4 2004

elizabethrocchino@lehighcounty.org wrote on 8/26/2004 8:11:34 AM :

Greetings.

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My name is Elizabeth Rocchino, and I am a realtime court reporter with the County of Lehigh, Pennsylvania. I was recently a realtime closed captioner for eight years, but was so frustrated with the company I worked for and their non-existent quality control and declining pay scale, that I retired from captioning and went into full-time court reporting, burned out and feeling incredibly sad. It seemed that nothing could be done to help the deaf and hard-of-hearing community receive equal access to programming. The captioning companies had waged war on each other, underbidding for contracts, putting the squeeze on overworked realtime captioners to their detriment and the detriment of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Networks added to this problem by not insisting on quality, and entering into long-term contracts with companies with a track record of bad quality just because they had low prices.

Recently, I received an e-mail regarding a petition for quality control to the FCC that does not have a docket number yet, but is sponsored jointly by ALDA, DHCAN, NAD and SHHH. Please take the time to read it. This is something that could truly change quality issues for the better in the closed captioning realm, and its time has come.

At the present time, the only people benefitting from closed captioning are the owners of closed captioning companies. Please stand with us and help change that.

Thank you for your time.

Elizabeth Rocchino
elizabethrocchino@lehighcounty.org

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Comment in re RM 11065

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

CC. 4 2004

joe@lefebvre-colorado.com wrote on 9/3/2004 11:15:23 AM :

The time has come in my life when if I should decide to watch television I must also utilize the closed captioning that is available. The problem is the quality of closed captioning is often times a poorly applied patch that does no one any good. It can be difficult trying to keep up with what's being said due to the speed of the captioning that a series of words mishmashed together make reading almost impossible. Then there are the times when the captioning is going, "ok" and then stops. The person doing the captioning seems to have gone on a coffee break. The person or persons on the screen are still talking but the captioning has paused in the conversation "way back when". The captioning starts again and now has multitudes of information to scribble onto the screen to hopefully get caught up. This kind of captioning usually happens with the nightly new programs. It's almost comical to try and utilize the captioning.

The quality of closed captioning provided for the recent Republican GOP Convention was incredible. Keeping up with what was being said and the speed was no problem at all.

The technology is obviously available, is the cost or effort too much that this service cannot be provided on a regular basis?

Joe A. LeFebvre
joe@lefebvre-colorado.com

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EMAIL COMMENT TO FCC IN RESPONSE TO PETITION FOR RM 11065

JustinDeMello@aol.com wrote on 8/26/2004 1:41:33 PM :

To: Federal Communications Commission
Fax: 1-866-418-0232
From: Justin De Mello
Fax: 505-776-3198
Date: August 26, 2004
Re: Captioning Petition filed on July 23, 2004

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

To Whom It May Concern:

I live in El Prado, New Mexico, just outside of Taos, New Mexico. I am a profoundly deaf adult who relies on television news broadcasts for information around the state. Within NM, all cities and towns throughout the state receive news broadcasts mainly out of Albuquerque, NM. These would be the following stations that I am aware of:

KASA channel 2
KOB channel 4
KNME channel 5
KOAT channel 7
KRQE channel 13
KWBQ channel 19

I find that news broadcasts out of Albuquerque for the entire state of NM are very poorly captioned any time of day, any day of the week. Rather than captions scrolling across most of the screen, almost all of the news broadcasts scroll 1/3 of the screen very rapidly making it extremely difficult to read. On top of this rapidity, much of what is captioned is misspelled, unintelligible, or nonexistent.

Live broadcasts of news are almost consistently never captioned. Weather broadcasts from all of these stations are also never captioned at all—be they live or pre-recorded. The fact that there are often severe weather conditions broadcast for specific areas of the state, this lack of captioning is a serious issue. If there are fires, flood warnings, snow storms, or ice warnings, none of this is captioned either live or in weather broadcasts. I have also found that “emergency announcements” for local areas that I live in as well as within Albuquerque are also never captioned.

I have DISH Network and receive over 100 channels on my TV. Because of the very bad local network captioning, I often do not watch the news out of Albuquerque since it is laborious to watch captions that disappear, or are consistently garbled. I will often try the various news channels (CNN, HNN, FXNWS,

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CNNFN, CNBC, MSNBC, CSPAN, CSPN2) in order to get some readable news. These are often captioned better but the problem with most of them is that sometimes they have no captions at all. Also, they do not provide important local news broadcasts. Still, CNN is famous for either captioning everything or nothing at all. There appears to be no rhyme or reason to when CNN captions their news programs and when they do not. At times CNN will go for an hours with no captions and then at the hour captions will begin for a new segment of broadcasting. I cannot figure out any pattern to their captioning availability.

I also receive HBO broadcasts and find that movies will generally be captioned but that programs that are not long prerecorded (such as Bill Maher, comedy broadcasts, and shows that are more "live") have many misspelled captions throughout and often trail severely behind that action on the screen making it impossible to understand what is happening and who is speaking.

Lastly, I find that many programs on just about every channel I have watched (prerecorded or not) will cease captioning on the last few moments of the program. There is nothing more maddening than spending an hour watching a program only to be cut off the last 2 or 3 minutes of the show. Again, I cannot figure out which station is the culprit in this since it happens on many of the networks. There are no apparent patterns to this problem.

I have been profoundly deaf for 13 years now and lived in California for 11 of those years. Since moving to New Mexico in 2002 I am shocked at how poorly captions are out of Albuquerque news broadcasts. It is my hope that quality will improve dramatically for both state and national broadcasts.

Thank you for your time and support with my concerns. I am not asking for something that you are not receiving in a quality form. It seems only fair that I, too, am able to receive what everyone else takes for granted.

Sincerely,

Justin De Mello
P.O.Box 2248
El Prado, NM 87529
Email: justindemello@aol.com
Phone: CapTel for Deaf: 1-877-243-2823 then enter my number: 505-776-3198
Fax: 505-776-3198